

**STATEMENT OF JOHN C. AHERN, JR.  
BEFORE THE MICHIGAN HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE ON 10-14-2009**

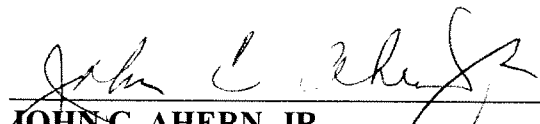
I am a retired union Electrician from IBEW Local #58 in Detroit, Michigan with 6000 active members and 1200 retired. I began as a construction electrician in 1956 and worked a wide variety of job sites until my retirement in 1992. I am a former business agent of Local #58 and President of the Association of Retirees, Wives and Widows of Local Union #58 IBEW. As an electrician on construction sites throughout Southeast Michigan I was continually exposed to asbestos containing products which ultimately caused me and many of my coworkers to contract asbestos lung disease. I was luckier than some who are no longer with us some having contracted mesothelioma and died.

I read House Bill 5167 and am familiar with it. I am just appalled that they would give these companies a free legal pass to exonerate them from their liability to these workers who unknowingly put their lives, lungs and their families at risk while helping to make millions of dollars for corporations whose past liability continues today. We don't exonerate criminals from their liability for their past actions.

If this bill passes, this will set a precedent for hundreds of other companies with a like liability from their predecessors. It seems to me that other companies can now merge or sell in order to get out of their liabilities. This has far reaching implications that other liable companies will eagerly follow.

I would like you to examine your own conscience as to supporting this precedent setting bill that would rob honest workers of their rights through the judicial system to be fairly compensated for the harm they endured from work through no fault of their own.

Finally, I would like to thank this body for allowing me to speak before you in defense of these workers' rights.



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**JOHN C. AHERN, JR.**  
PRESIDENT OF RETIREES' ASSOCIATION  
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